



Does the Bible Teach Us to Pray to Mary, the Dead Saints, and Other Beings in Heaven?

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The Bible is strictly clear that we are to pray, adore, venerate, or worship God alone. We are not to bow down and worship the form of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below ([Exodus 20:4–5](#); [Nehemiah 9:6](#); [Revelation 4:11](#); [15:4](#)). It is quite clear that the apostles and holy angels would reject worship or prayers addressed to them, all with the same response: “*Worship God alone!*” ([Acts 10:25–26](#); [14:13–15](#) ; [Revelation 19:10](#); [22:9](#)).

However, it is very unfortunate that some churches and Christian communities circumvent this biblical principle by teaching their members to pray to Mary, the dead saints and/or the angles. By so doing, “*They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised...*” ([Romans 1:25](#)) . Although churches of this line of belief hardly admit to worshiping Mary and the saints by trying to differentiate between worship and veneration, the practice itself is no different.

While there is no clear difference between veneration and worship, it does not matter what the practice is called. The Bible nowhere instructs followers of Jesus Christ to offer worship, veneration, adoration, or anything similar to anyone but God. Using a different word does not change the essence of what is being done. A definition of “*venerate*” is “*to regard with respect or reverence.*” Nowhere in the Bible are we told to revere anyone but God alone. While there is nothing wrong with respecting both Mary (described by the Bible as “*highly favored*” by God, [Luke 1:28](#)) and those who went to heaven before us (see [Hebrews chapter 1](#)), there is no instruction in the Bible to revere them.

Catholics are a great example of Christians who claim to venerate Mary. One major way Catholics “revere” Mary and the saints is by praying to them. Catholics view Mary and the saints as “intercessors” before God. They believe that a saint, glorified in heaven, has been perfected in love and has “*more direct access*” to God than earthly sinners, therefore prayers delivered by a saint are more effective than our direct prayers to God. This concept is blatantly unbiblical. [Hebrews 4:16](#) tells us that believers here on earth have direct access to God and can “*approach the throne of grace with confidence*”. The Bible teaches us that only Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit intercede for us with the Father ([Hebrews 7:25](#); [Romans 8:26–27](#)). If the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity already intercede for us with the Father, it is almost unthinkable that anyone would want a human (or angel) in heaven to intercede for them. Moreover, [1 Timothy 2:5](#) teaches us that Jesus is the only mediator between man and God, so Mary and saints cannot take Jesus place. Before the completion of Christ's work on the cross, God’s people were represented before God by priests. However, when Jesus died, “*the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom*” ([Mark 15:38](#)). Believers in Christ in New Testament times are themselves priests ([Revelation 1:6](#)), and our high priest is Jesus Christ ([Hebrews 4:14](#)). As children of God, believers have direct access to God in Jesus name. Jesus Himself taught believers to pray directly to God ([Matthew 6:9](#)) and He mentioned that prayers should be offered in His name alone ([John 14:13-14](#)).We are also assured that God hears us when we pray ([1 John 5:14](#)). It is therefore clear that whether one prays to Mary and/or the saints, or asks them for their prayers, neither practice is biblical.

Another way Catholics “*venerate*” Mary and saints is to create statues and images of them. Many Catholics use images of Mary and/or saints as “*good luck charms*.” Any cursory reading of the Bible will reveal that this practice is blatant idolatry ([Exodus 20:4-6](#); [John 4:24](#); [1 Corinthians 12:1-2](#); [1 John 5:21](#)). Rubbing the rosary beads is idolatry. Lighting candles in front of a statue or portrayal of a saint is idolatry. Burying a statue of Joseph in hopes of selling your house (and countless other Catholic practices) is idolatry.

Moreover, praying to the dead is strictly forbidden in the Bible. [Deuteronomy 18:11](#) is very clear that anyone who “*consults with the dead*” is “*detestable to the Lord.*” The story of Saul consulting a medium to conjure up the spirit of dead Samuel resulted in his death ([1 Samuel 28:1-25](#); [1 Chronicles 10:13-14](#)). We also see a similar account in [Isaiah 8:19](#). Obviously, God has declared that such things are not to be done.

In conclusion, God wants to hear from us personally, as He abundantly gives us invitations to come to Him ([Matthew 11:28](#) and [Revelation 22:17](#)). He does not want us to pray to or through humans (neither dead nor alive), man-made objects or any other created object or being. Whether the practice is described as “worship” or “veneration” or any other term, terminology is not the issue. Glory, praise, and honor belong to God alone. We should not try to ascribe anything that belongs to God to anyone else, for that is an abominable idolatry. By directing our prayers to anyone other than God we deprive God of the glory that belongs only to Him.

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